

FAMILY GUIDE

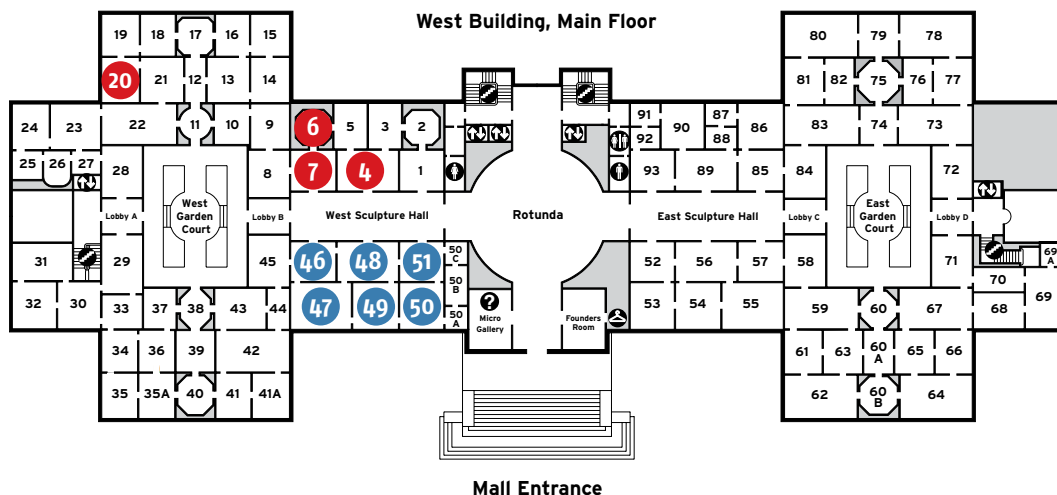
Italian and Dutch Art at the National Gallery of Art



ages
6 and up



Welcome to the National Gallery's Collection of Italian and Dutch Art



Follow this booklet for an experience in “artful looking.”
Cues and **questions** encourage group discussions that turn
looking into learning. Share and compare opinions as you
look at the art on display.

**Remember: Explore the paintings with your eyes only and do
not touch the works of art. If you stand about three feet away
from the art, you will actually have a better view.**

GALLERY

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Italian Galleries

New Spirit in Art

Does this room feel like a different world?

In the 1400s in Florence many people believed they lived in a new age—later called the Renaissance (“rebirth”). Inspired by ancient Greek and Roman culture, Florentines began to explore nature and history. Artists painted pictures to look like windows onto the real world, with believable space and people.



Portrait of Matteo Olivieri

Explore this gallery together and **look** for these Renaissance hallmarks:

- **portraits** (paintings of citizens had not been commissioned since Roman times)
- Greek and Roman **architecture** (think columns and arcades)
- **volume** (people look like they have real weight and could move)
- **depth** created by artist’s use of proportion



Roman portico

Can you see where one artist scored his painting as a guide to help him create depth?



**Ceiling lines converge
to create depth**

GALLERY

6



Can you find this?



Another famous portrait
by Leonardo, in Paris



Enlarged image of
Leonardo's fingerprint

A Portrait by Leonardo

Before you is a portrait of Ginevra de' Benci—the only painting in North America by Leonardo da Vinci, one of the most famous Renaissance artists. Who was Ginevra?

Challenge yourselves as a group to decide:

Fashionista or wallflower? Adventurous or scaredy cat? Artistic or athletic? Outdoorsy or just pictured outside? Her age? An event this painting might celebrate?

Here are some hints:

A black shoulder scarf was then the height of style.

A line remains of her poetry: “I am a mountain tiger.”

The juniper bush (behind Ginevra) is a pun on her name—juniper is “ginepro” in Italian.

Women were married as young as fourteen.

She is *sedici anni*—*sei* (6) + *dieci* (10).

Where is Leonardo in this portrait? **Look closely**—maybe you can catch him. His fingerprint—but not his signature—is just visible above Ginevra's left shoulder. He was among the first artists to blend oil paint for more subtle light and shadow contrasts.

GALLERY

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Mother and Child

Perhaps the most popular image in Italian art is the Madonna and Child. During the Renaissance, depicting their human bond was especially important. Jesus is shown as a naked baby either in his mother's lap or reaching up for her warm embrace. Mary tenderly watches her baby's every move.

Choose the Madonna and Child painting you think best shows this bond. **Defend** your choice to your group.

Is it Mary's expression?

Baby Jesus sweetly seeking his mother?

The gaze between mother and child?

The setting around them?

Identify these symbols of Mary:

- ☐ **blue cloak** (blue for heaven; blue was also the most costly paint)
- ☐ **white veil** (white for innocence and purity)
- ☐ **strawberry plant** (symbolizing the Incarnation of Christ; humility)
- ☐ **halo** (a fine ring of gold encircling the head to signify holiness)



Portrait, in Siena,
of the young Raphael



The Alba Madonna
before it was restored

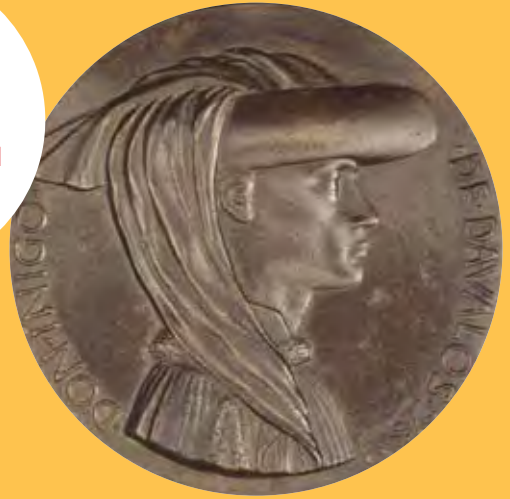
Raphael's *Madonna*

In his own time Raphael was called “the prince of painters.” He is best known for his grand frescoes in the Vatican and for his many paintings of the Madonna. One of his most famous representations, recently restored to its original beauty, is called *The Alba Madonna*.

Think about what qualities make this round painting (tondo) both humble and grand. How would you classify the details below?

	Humble	Grand
The Madonna on the ground, not on a heavenly throne	_____	_____
Figures arranged in a pyramid	_____	_____
Delicate mood and colors	_____	_____
Roman <i>campagna</i> (countryside) background	_____	_____
Figures engage with one another rather than look out	_____	_____
Mary’s strong left hand and foot	_____	_____
Wash of heavenly blue across canvas	_____	_____
Tiny plants around the figures	_____	_____

Renaissance
protrait medals
like this one were
inspired by Greek and
Roman coins.



Raphael (pictured
here between age 19 and
23) began working in art
studios by age 11.

The 2004
restoration of *The Alba
Madonna* removed old,
yellowing varnish and
overpainting to bring back
the painting's original
pastel color tones.



Create Your Own Portrait

Now that you have investigated Ginevra's portrait, **create** a two-sided portrait of yourself. Use the following questions as guides:

Front (*recto*)

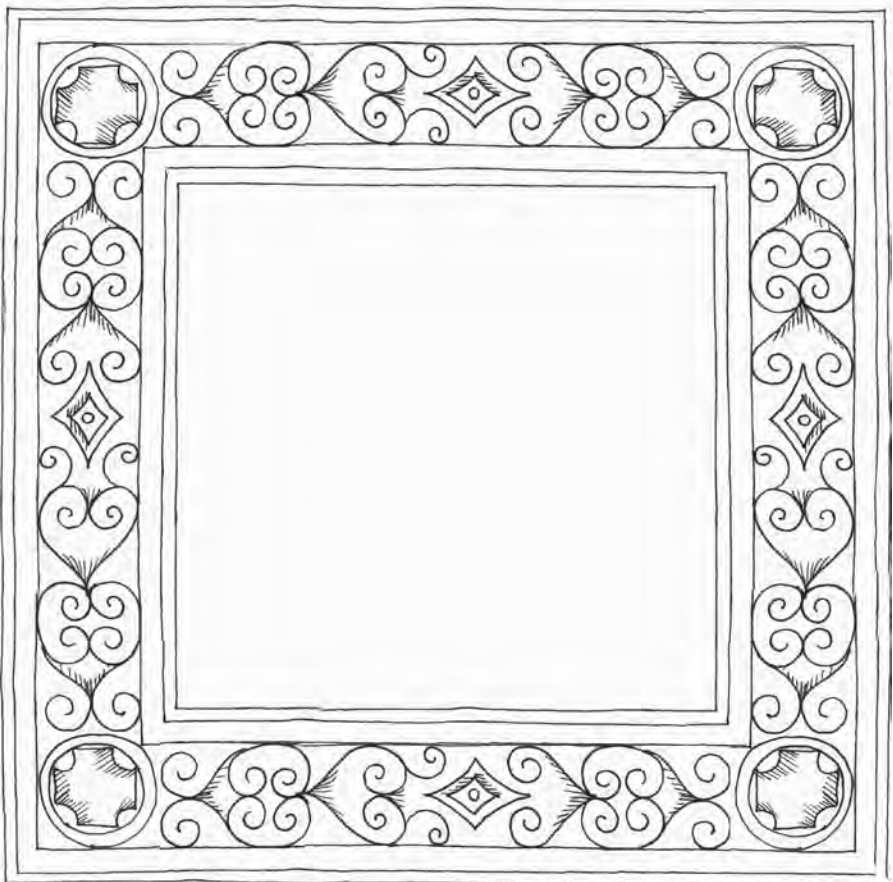
Do you want to be in profile or facing front?

What expression describes you best?

What clothing captures your personality?

Think about the background of your portrait:

What is your favorite place?

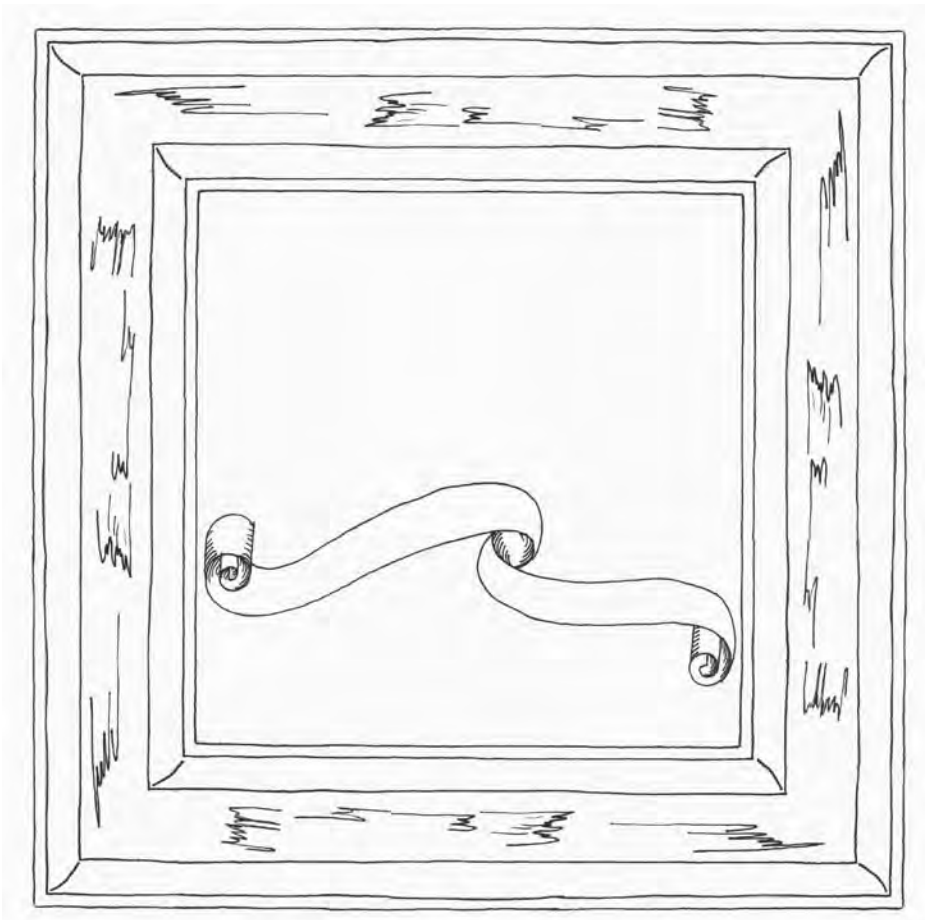


Back (*verso*)

What are two objects that could represent you?

Animal? Hobby? Plant?

Fill in the scroll with your own motto describing how you live your life. (The Latin inscription on the back of Ginevra's portrait translates as "Beauty adorns virtue.")



GALLERIES

51

48

46

Dutch Paintings of the 1600s

Pronk and Portraits



Beware. Looks can be deceiving. Seventeenth-century Dutch people believed in appearing modest, not showy, and the dress code for adults was black. Still, they displayed luxury — **pronk** — in sly ways. Look carefully at portraits of Dutch people in Galleries 51, 48, and 46.

Find examples of

- ☐ **black clothes** made of wool, satin, or velvet
- ☐ starched **white linen** and **lace** on collars and cuffs
- ☐ **felt hats** (usually black, gray, or tan), made by hand from beaver skins and very expensive
- ☐ **stylishly mussed long hair** on men (very cool at the time)
- ☐ **bright colors** — young men and women, unmarried soldiers, and children could wear brightly colored outfits



Choose words you think describe the subjects' style.

gloomy **playful** **serious** **decked out** _____ **other**

Who revealed more *pronk* in their portraits — men or women? **Study** details such as jewelry, leather, fur, and feathers. Remember, the Dutch often avoided the appearance of luxury because of their belief in modesty. **Compare** your choices.

GALLERIES

47 49



A Dutch windmill



Landschappen (Landscapes)

The Netherlands hugs the ocean and sits mostly at or below sea level, so the Dutch turned their northern, watery environment to their advantage. They built windmills and dikes to control the water and to create land for farms and pastures, and canals to provide transportation routes across the country.

Search for clues among the paintings in Galleries 47 and 49 to find out what your life would have been like in the seventeenth century.

Which animals might you have at home?

dog sheep chicken llama pet bird cow pig

How would you get your cow across the river? What creates power to grind wheat for your bread? *hint: wind*

How would you travel to a friend's house or school?

boat horse walk ice-skate sled

Weather Watch! The Netherlands is located on the North Sea between Belgium and Germany. What do the broad skies in Dutch landscapes tell you about the weather?

sunny warm chance of rain cloudy cool windy

GALLERY

50



Stilleven (Still Life)

Paintings of Dutch food, table settings, and flowers are known as **stilleven**. Dutch artists tried to make paintings of such objects appear lifelike, even though it sometimes meant exaggerating textures or pairing items that would not be together in nature—such as flowers that bloom at different times of the year.

Find the still-life painting in Gallery 50 that looks most lifelike to you. **Defend** your choice using evidence such as

- ☐ **exact details:** veins on leaves, light glinting on metal plates, fruit fuzz
- ☐ **textures:** scaly reptile skin, downy feathers, silky flower petals
- ☐ **setting:** indoor, outdoor, tabletop, display in a vase

Look at the paintings and decide what you would choose for a snack right now.

ham olives peach grapes beer*

plums bread oysters (seasoned with vinegar!)

*Adults drank beer, and children drank a watered-down version because industries such as bleaching and dyeing cloth polluted Dutch waterways.

Before you leave this gallery, see if you can **find**

- ☐ **tulips**—the Netherlands' symbolic flowering bulbs
- ☐ **fish**—oysters, herring, sardines, native to this country of waterways and seas



Tulip bulbs were first imported to the Netherlands from Turkey. Striped tulips got their patterning from a virus.



The Dutch ate a lot of fish, even for breakfast, as their seas and rivers were full of them. Here, a catch of herring.



Nine thousand mills (*molen*) dotted the Netherlands in the 1600s. Using wind or water for power, mills crushed and cut raw materials to make all kinds of items—from flour and mustard to paint and timber.

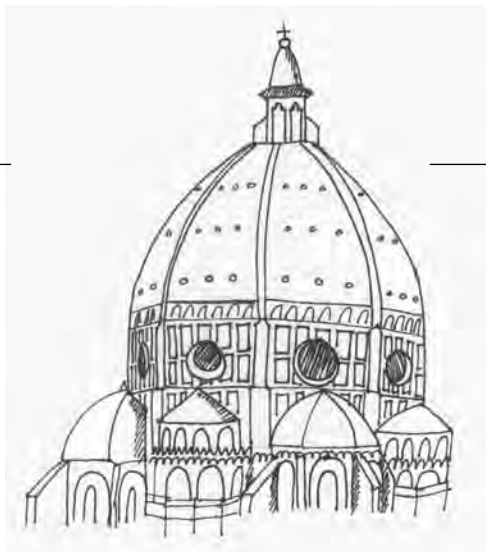
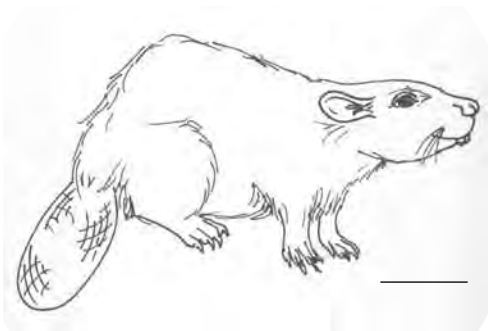
With many waterways frozen in winter, Dutch children often skated and played on the ice. *Kolf*—a cross between hockey and golf—was a favorite game. Its goal was to hit a target on the ice, such as a pole, in the fewest strokes.



Color and Match

Match each letter with the correct drawing.

- A Italian family crest
- B Italian Duomo (church)
- C Beaver
- D Dutch sailboat
- E Delft blue-and-white tile



Captions

All illustrations in this booklet are details from the following works of art:

Cover

Florentine Fifteenth Century, *Matteo Olivieri* (?), 1430s, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Andrew W. Mellon Collection

Hendrick Avercamp, *A Scene on the Ice*, c. 1625, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

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Florentine Fifteenth Century, *Matteo Olivieri* (?), 1430s, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Andrew W. Mellon Collection

Fra Carnevale, *The Annunciation*, c. 1445/1450, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

Benozzo Gozzoli, *The Feast of Herod and the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist*, 1461–1462, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

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Leonardo da Vinci, *Ginevra de' Benci* (reverse), c. 1474/1478, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

Leonardo da Vinci, *Mona Lisa*, 1503–1506, Réunion des Musées Nationaux/Art Resource, New York, Louvre, Paris, France

Leonardo da Vinci, *Ginevra de' Benci* (obverse), c. 1474/1478, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

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Filippino Lippi, *The Adoration of the Child*, c. 1475/1480, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Andrew W. Mellon Collection

Pierre Joseph Redouté, *Frasier à bouquets — Strawberries (Fragaria)*, from “Choix des plus belles fleurs,” by Redouté, Paris: 1827, pl. 83, The LuEsther T. Mertz Library, NYBG/Art Resource, New York

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Bernardino Pinturicchio, *Scenes from the Life of Pius II: Canonization of Saint Catherine of Siena*, 1502–1508, Scala/Art Resource, New York, Libreria Piccolomini, Duomo, Siena, Italy

Raphael, *The Alba Madonna* (pre-restoration), c. 1510, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Andrew W. Mellon Collection

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Pisanello, *Don Inigo d'Avalos, d. 1484, Grand Chamberlain of Naples from 1442* (obverse), c. 1448/1449, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Samuel H. Kress Collection

Bernardino Pinturicchio, *Scenes from the Life of Pius II: Canonization of Saint Catherine of Siena*, 1502–1508, Scala/Art Resource, New York, Libreria Piccolomini, Duomo, Siena, Italy

Raphael, *The Alba Madonna*, c. 1510, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Andrew W. Mellon Collection

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Aelbert Cuyp, *Lady and Gentleman on Horseback*, c. 1655, reworked 1660/1665, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Widener Collection

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Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Windmill*, 1641, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of R. Horace Gallatin

Aelbert Cuyp, *Lady and Gentleman on Horseback*, c. 1655, reworked 1660/1665, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Widener Collection

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Jan van Huysum, *Still Life with Flowers and Fruit*, c. 1715, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Patrons' Permanent Fund and Gift of Philip and Lizanne Cunningham

Abraham Mignon, *Still Life with Fruit, Fish, and a Nest*, c. 1675, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. H. John Heinz III

Jan Davidsz de Heem, *Vase of Flowers*, c. 1660, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Andrew W. Mellon Fund

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Abraham Mignon, *Still Life with Fruit, Fish, and a Nest*, c. 1675, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. H. John Heinz III

Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Mill*, 1645/1648, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Widener Collection

Hendrick Avercamp, *A Scene on the Ice*, c. 1625, National Gallery of Art, Washington, Ailsa Mellon Bruce Fund

Back cover

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